

Fundamentals of Public Sector Management

GS/DMGM 5110A FB

Fall 2025

Course Outline

[updated August 9, 2025]

Course Information

Course Instructor: Professor Poland Lai

E-mail: Poland.lai@yorku.ca

Office Hours & Location: Thursday, from 1:30 pm (Zoom) or by appointment

Course Time & Days: Thursday, from 4 to 7 pm

Class Location: MK 5030

Land Acknowledgement

York University recognizes that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region ([LA&PS Land Acknowledgement](#)).

Course Overview

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to fundamental principles of public sector management with a particular emphasis on the Canadian context. This course will present some of the emerging topics in understanding management in the government and non-profit context. Students will examine aspects of the interplay between the public and private sectors, such as procurement and risk management.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe interactions between public and private sectors.
- Identify and define basic principles, objectives, structures and processes of government and governance.
- Describe and assess the effectiveness of tools available to address financial management, budgeting and accountability.
- Develop a basic understanding of the key concepts in program evaluation.
- Explain ideas, views and critiques logically, clearly and professionally.

Course Format and Organization

This course includes both in-person and asynchronous elements. We will always meet as a group on Thursday starting at 4:00 p.m. through an in-person session on campus and other learning activities. It is recommended to attend the weekly live sessions to help enhance your understanding and have the opportunity to engage, participate, and ask questions.

Additional learning activities will also take place on the course's eClass site. You can complete those learning activities at your own pace, following the schedule of readings and activities.

Meeting/Activity	Day	Time	Description
Lecture (in-person)	Thursday	4–7 pm	We will always meet in person unless specified by the instructor. There will be a short break. There will be other learning activities during our meeting time. For example, students may be asked to watch a pre-recorded video or break into small groups.
Office hours (Zoom)	Thursday	1:30 pm (Zoom)	Office hour will end if no one is waiting at 2 pm.

Meeting/Activity	Day	Time	Description
Assignments and Final take-home exam via the course's eClass site	To be completed asynchronously		Students may be asked to complete other learning activities. See the course's eClass site. Review course announcements on a regular basis.
Readings	Prior to each lecture		The readings each week for the course will be quite heavy, but it is important that you take the time to do the readings prior to each lecture and not fall behind. This will help with one's understanding of the material presented during the lectures. See "Course Schedule: Weekly Readings and Activities" below.

Technical Requirements

Several platforms will be used in this course (e.g., eClass, Zoom, etc.) through which students will interact with the course materials, the course director, as well as with one another.

Using Zoom

Students shall note the following:

- Zoom is hosted on servers in the United States and Canada. Recordings done since May 1, 2022 are stored in Canada. For more information, please refer to the notes on [Zoom Privacy and Security](#) provided by Information Security at York.
- If you have privacy concerns about your data, provide only your first name or a nickname when you join a session.
- The system is configured in a way that all participants are automatically notified when a session is being recorded. In other words, a session cannot be recorded without you knowing about it.

Here are some useful links for student computing information, resources, and help:

- [Student Guide to eClass](#)
- [Zoom@YorkU Best Practices](#)



[Zoom@YorkU User Reference Guide](#)



[University Information Technology \(UIT\) Student Services](#)



[Student Guide to eLearning at York University](#)

To determine Internet connection and speed, there are online tests, such as [Speedtest](#), that can be run. If you need technical assistance, please consult the [University Information Technology \(UIT\) Student Services](#) web page. For more specific assistance, please write to askit@yorku.ca.

Course Communication Plan

Course webpage: eClass

eClass contains all the course material and announcements. The website contains this course outline and the following:



Announcements on all important matters in the course. You should check these several times a week and especially before class in case there is a class cancellation.



Pre-recorded videos (if any).



Lecture slides to print as course notes.



Assignment information.

Access to the course web site is restricted to students enrolled in the course. You will have to register and then log in with your York Passport account in the eClass @York University link.

Email Protocol



Questions re course admin and grades: email the course instructor (email address listed above).



Questions re computing issues: email York helpdesk (helpdesk@yorku.ca).



E-mails will be responded within 48 to 72 hours.



If your enquiry cannot be addressed via e-mail, the course instructor may ask you to drop by the virtual office hours.

Course Evaluation

Assessment	Due Date	Weight %
Participation	On-going	15
Assignment—Risk Management / Procurement / Public Private Partnership (2 out of 3 assignments)	4 pm Thursday, November 6	15
Assignment—Auditor General report (2 out of 3 assignments)	4 pm Thursday, November 13	15
Presentation—Assessment of a human resources or ethics issue to be chosen by student	In-class Thursday, November 20	25
Assignment—Fiscal and Financial Planning (2 out of 3 assignments)	4 pm Thursday, November 27	15
Reflection	By 4 pm Friday, November 28	5
Take-home final	4 pm Friday, December 5	25
		100%

Assessment Descriptions

More information will be provided on eClass.

Submitting Assignments

Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Assignments are to be handed in via eClass.

Late Work Policy

Assignments received later than the due date will be penalized (one-half letter grade per day that assignment is late). Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., may be considered by the course instructor but will require supporting documentation (e.g., a doctor's letter). Students are encouraged to speak with the instructor if they encounter difficulties with meeting course requirements.

How to Use Citations

- [SPARK Student Papers & Academic Research Kit](#)
- [Chicago Style Overview](#), YorkU Libraries
- [MLA Style Overview](#), YorkU Libraries
- [APA Style Overview](#), YorkU Libraries
- [Drop-in Research Support](#), YorkU Libraries
- [Writing Centre](#)

Using Generative Artificial Intelligence in this Course

Students are **not** permitted to use generative artificial intelligence (AI) in this course. Submitting any work created through the use of generative AI tools will be considered a violation of York University's [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#). If you do not know whether an online resource or tool can be used in this course, please contact your instructor for guidance. For more information, please review [AI Technology & Academic Integrity: Information for Students](#).

Course Schedule: Weekly Readings and Activities

Required Course Materials

All materials will be posted on eClass. Each week the course materials will be divided into two categories: “core” and “further readings”. The core materials are mandatory readings. The further readings are suggestions for more in-depth understanding of that week’s topic.

Course Schedule

Session 1

October 23, 2025

Basic principles, objectives, structures and processes of government and governance

Core

Dunn, C. (2018). Introduction. In C. Dunn (Ed.) *The Handbook of Canadian Public Administration*, Third edition (pp 1-12). Oxford University Press.

Howlett, M. (2018). The Policy Process. In C. Dunn (Ed.) *The Handbook of Canadian Public Administration* (3rd edition) (pp 272-294). Oxford University Press.

Overview of the public policy process

Boyd, B. (2024, June 16). Public service reflections: Why the role of civil servants must evolve to ensure public trust. [*The Conversation*](#).

Further readings

Brock, K. (2022). Executive-parliamentary relations in Canada: Moving forward from the pandemic. *Canadian Public Administration*, 65(3), 497–515. doi.org/10.1111/capa.12489

Cooper, C. A., & Marier, P. (2021). Executive policy styles. In *The Routledge Handbook of Policy Styles* (pp. 303–314). Routledge.

Howlett, M. (2022). What is a Policy Tool?: An Overview of the Tools Approach to Public Policy. In *The Routledge Handbook of Policy Tools* (pp. 3–18). Routledge.

Institute for Public Administration of Canada
ipac.ca/

Session 2

October 30, 2025

New Public Management, procurement and Public Private Partnerships

Risk management

Core

Elvira Uyarra and Oishee Kundu. (2022). Public Procurement. In K Schedler (Ed.), *Elgar Encyclopedia of Public Management*, (pp. 288-291). Edward Elgar.

Migone, A., & Howlett, M. (2024). The Pigeons Coming Home to Roost: The Continuing Perils of Contracting Out in Canada. *Canadian Public Administration*, 67(4), 533–547. doi.org/10.1111/capa.12588

Government of Ontario. (n.d.) [*Enterprise Risk Management Directive*](#)

Auditor General. (2022) [*Value-for-Money Audit: COVID-19 Contracts and Procurement*](#) (Toronto: Auditor General) (pages 1 – 36 only)

Further readings

Lange, D. de. (2023, July 11). Better collaboration between public and private sectors could improve urban public transportation. [*The Conversation*](#).

Schedler, K. (2022). New Public Management. In K Schedler (Ed.), *Elgar Encyclopedia of Public Management*, (pp. 16-20). Edward Elgar.

Siemiatycki, M. (2018). Public-Private Partnerships in Canada: Reflections on Twenty Years of Practice. In C. Dunn (Ed.) *The Handbook of Canadian Public Administration* (3rd ed) (pp. 334-348). Oxford University Press.

Snowdon, A. W., & Wright, M. S. and A. (2021). Key Characteristics of a Fragile Healthcare Supply Chain: Learning from a Pandemic. *Healthcare Quarterly*, 24(1).

Session 3

November 6, 2025

Human
Resources
Management in
Public Sector

Core

Bach, T. and Wegrich, K. (2022). Politician–Bureaucrat Relations. In K. Schedler (Ed.), *Elgar Encyclopedia of Public Management*, (pp. 150-154). Edward Elgar.

Stakeholder
Engagement

Longo, J. (2017). The evolution of citizen and stakeholder engagement in Canada, from Spicer to #Hashtags. *Canadian Public Administration*, 60(4), 517–537. doi.org/10.1111/capa.12229

Professional
Skills, diversity
& inclusion,
Communications

Ohemeng, F. and McGrandle J. (2021). Employee Perception of Inclusivity and Organizational Performance: The Case of the Ontario Public Service. *Canadian Public Administration* 64 (1): 26–50. doi.org/10.1111/capa.12407.

Further readings

Auditor General of Canada. (2023). 2023 *Reports of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada: Report 5 Inclusion in the Workplace for Racialized Employees*. Auditor General of Canada.

Roy, J. (2022). COVID-19, digitization and hybrid workspaces: A critical inflection point for public sector governance and workforce development. *Canadian Public Administration*, 65(3), 569–575. doi.org/10.1111/capa.12475

Action: Assignment—Risk Management / Procurement / Public Private Partnership due at 4 pm (2 out of 3 assignments)

Session 4 November 13, 2025

Responsibility,
Responsiveness
and Ethics

Core

Auditor General of Ontario—About us

auditor.on.ca/en/content/aboutus/whatwedo.html

Public Sector
Financial
Management,
Budgeting And
Accountability

Auditor General of Canada

[oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/au fs e 371.html](https://oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/au_fs_e_371.html)

Ontario Ministry of Finance. (n.d.) Ontario's fiscal cycle

ontario.ca/page/ontario-budget-basics

Graham, A. (2019). *Canadian Public-Sector Financial Management* (3rd edition). School of Policy Studies, Queen's University. (Chapter 1)

Shepherd, R. (2022). Internal governmental performance and accountability in Canada: Insights and lessons for post-pandemic improvement. *Canadian Public Administration* 65, 516–537.

doi.org/10.1111/capa.12490.

Further readings

Adi, S, & Dutil, P. (2018). Searching for Strategy: Value for Money (VFM) Audit Choice in the New Public Management Era. *Canadian Public Administration*, 61 (1): 91–108. doi.org/10.1111/capa.12254.

Lindquist, E. A. (2024). Moving Ottawa's Department and Agency Reporting Forward: Encouraging Accountability and Sustaining Reform. *Canadian Public Administration*, 67(4), 632–643.

doi.org/10.1111/capa.12601

McIlroy-Young, B., Henstra, D., & Thistlethwaite, J. (2022). Treasure Tools: Using Public Funds to Achieve Policy Objectives. In *The Routledge Handbook of Policy Tools* (pp. 332–344). Routledge.

Action: Assignment—Auditor General report due at 4 pm. (2 out of 3 assignments)

Session 5 November 20, 2025

Program
Evaluation—Key

Core

Concepts,
Frameworks and
Ethics

Mertens, D. M and Wilson, A. T. (2019). *Program Evaluation Theory and Practice: A Comprehensive Guide* (2nd edition), The Guilford Press.
Chapter:
1 – Introduction to Evaluation: Defining terms and Ethical Considerations pp. 1-18 and pp. 25-27
2 – Framing Evaluation: Paradigms, Branches and Theories pp. 35-47
3 – The Postpositivist Paradigm and the Methods Branch pp. 54-58
4 – The Pragmatic Paradigm and the Use Branch pp. 85-87
5 – The Constructivist Paradigm and the Values Branch pp. 129-133
6 – Transformative Paradigm and the Social Justice Branch pp. 157-168
8 – Evaluation Purposes, Types and Questions pp. 245-285

Newcomer, K. E., Hatry, H. P. and Wholey, J. S. (Eds.) (2015). *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation* (4th edition), Jossey-Bass.
Chapter 3 – Using Logic Models pp. 62-87

Further readings

McDavid, J., & Henderson, K. (2021). Hard won lessons learned in the evaluation field: Implications for behavioural insights practice. *Canadian Public Administration*, 64(1), 7–25.
doi.org/10.1111/capa.12401

Treasury Board Secretariat. (n.d) [Evaluation in the Government of Canada](#) (Ottawa: Treasury Board Secretariat).

Action: Presentation—Assessment of a human resources or ethics issue to be chosen by student

Session 6

November 27, 2025

Program
Evaluation—
designs, threats
to validity and
data collection
methods

Core

Mertens, D. M and Wilson, A. T. (2019). *Program Evaluation Theory and Practice: A Comprehensive Guide* (2nd edition), The Guilford Press. Chapter 9 - Evaluation Designs pp. 286-297 and pp. 325-332

Newcomer, K. E., Hatry, H. P. and Wholey, J. S. (Eds.) (2015). *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation* (4th edition), Jossey-Bass.
Chapter:
14 – Using Surveys pp. 344-382
20 – Focus Group Interviewing pp. 506-534

Further readings

Canadian Evaluation Society. [CES Guidance for Ethical Evaluation Practice](#)

[United Nations Evaluations Group](#)

Action: Assignment—Fiscal and Financial Planning due at 4 pm (2 out of 3 assignments).

Course Policies

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information:



[Student Rights & Responsibilities](#)



[Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)

Please also review the following course policies:

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

In this course, we strive to maintain academic honesty to the highest extent possible. Please familiarize yourself with the meaning of academic integrity by completing [SPARK's Academic Integrity module](#) at the beginning of the course. Breaches of academic honesty range from cheating to plagiarism (i.e., the improper crediting of another's work, the representation of another's ideas as your own, etc.). All instances of academic dishonesty in this course will be reported to the appropriate University authorities and can be punishable according to the [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#).

TURNITIN

To promote academic integrity in this course, students will normally be required to submit their written assignments to Turnitin (via the course's eClass site) for a review of textual similarities and the detection of possible plagiarism. In so doing, students will allow their material to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used only for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin service are described on the Turnitin.com website. York students may opt out of using Turnitin. If you wish to opt out, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible.

ACCESSIBILITY

While all individuals are expected to satisfy the requirements of their program of study and to aspire to achieve excellence, the University recognizes that persons with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to perform at their best. The University encourages students with disabilities to register with [Student Accessibility Services](#) to discuss their accommodation needs as early as possible in the term to establish the recommended academic accommodations that will be communicated to Course Directors through their Letter of Accommodation (LOA).

Please let your instructor know as early as possible in the term if you anticipate requiring academic accommodation so that we can discuss how to consider your accommodation needs within the context of this course. Sufficient notice is needed so that reasonable steps for accommodation can be discussed. Accommodations for tests/exams normally require three (3) weeks (or 21 days) before the scheduled test/exam to arrange.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE ACCOMMODATION

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community, and making reasonable and appropriate [accommodations to adherents for observances of special significance](#). Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for course examinations, tests, or deadlines conflict with a date of religious significance, please contact the instructor within the first three (3) weeks of class.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Course materials are designed for use as part of this particular course at York University and are the intellectual property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third-party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian copyright law. Students may not publish, post on an Internet site, sell, or otherwise distribute any course materials or work without the instructor's express permission. Course materials should only be used by students enrolled in this course.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g., uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a charge of misconduct according to York's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), the [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#), and/or legal consequences for copyright violations.

STUDENT CONDUCT IN THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

York University is committed to fostering teaching and learning environments that are free of disruptive and/or harassing behaviour, are physically safe, and conducive to effective teaching and learning. Students and instructors are expected to maintain a professional relationship

characterized by courtesy, civility, and mutual respect and to refrain from actions disruptive to such a relationship. Individuals who fail to adhere to such standards and who violate University or public law may be subject to disciplinary action by the University.

For more information, see the policies on [Disruptive and/or Harassing Behaviour in Academic Situations](#), the [Student Conduct and Responsibilities](#), and the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#).

NETIQUETTE FOR ECLASS AND ONLINE LEARNING

Students and instructors have a joint responsibility to create and maintain a welcoming and inclusive learning environment. All students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). Please review and familiarize yourself with behaviours that support “netiquette” in virtual classrooms by consulting the [Guide to Netiquette](#) and [Student Guide to eLearning](#).

HEALTH AND SAFETY

All York students and instructors share responsibility for the safety and well-being of the community while on York's campuses. Please continue to check [YUBetter Together](#) for the latest information on health and safety.

Student Support and Resources

To help you succeed academically, York University offers a wide range of resources and services.

- [Student Accessibility Services](#) are available for support and accessibility accommodation when required.
- [Student Counselling, Health & Wellbeing](#) offers workshops, resources, and counselling to support your academic success.
- [The Writing Centre](#) provides multiple avenues of writing-based support including drop-in sessions, one-to-one appointments, a Multilingual Studio, and an Accessibility Specialist.
- [ESL Open Learning Centre \(OLC\)](#) supports students with building proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking English.
- [Learning Skills Services](#) provides tips for time management, effective study and learning habits, keeping up with coursework, and other learning-related supports.
- [Learning Commons](#) provides links to supports for time management, writing, study skills, preparing for exams, and other learning-related resources.

- [Roadmap to Student Success](#) provides students with timely and targeted resources to help them achieve academic, personal, and professional success.
- [Office of Student Community Relations \(OSCR\)](#) is responsible for administering the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) and provides critical incident support.
- [goSAFE](#) is staffed by York students and can accompany York community members to and from any on-campus location, such as the Village Shuttle pick-up hub, parking lots, bus stops, or residences.

For a full list of academic, wellness, and campus resources visit [Student Support & Resources](#).